

# THE DURHAM CHRONICLE

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The king of course was beside himself with rage.

"By God's soul," he swore, "she shall marry Louis of France or I will have her whipped to death on the Smithfield pillory!" And in his wicked heart—so impervious to a single lasting good impulse—he really meant it.

Immediately after this, the king, De Longueville and Wolsey set out for London.

I remained behind hoping to see the girls, and after a short time a page plucked me by the sleeve, saying the princess wished to see me.

The page conducted me to the same room in which had been fought the bat-



"There is my answer, sir!"

tle with Mary in bed. The door had been placed on its hinges again, but the bed was tumbled as Mary had left it, and the room was in great disorder.

"Oh, Sir Edwin," began Mary, who was weeping, "was ever woman in such frightful trouble? My brother is killing me. Can he not see that I could not live through a week of this marriage? And I have been deserted by all my friends, too, excepting Jane. She, poor thing, cannot leave."

"You know I would not go," said Jane parenthetically. Mary continued, "You, too, have been home an entire week and have not been near me."

I began to soften at the sight of her grief and concluded with Brandon that, after all, her beauty could well cover a multitude of sins, perhaps even this, her great transgression against him.

The princess was trying to check her weeping and in a moment took up the thread of her unfinished sentence: "And Master Brandon, too, left without so much as sending me one little word—not a line nor a syllable. He did not come near me, but went off as if I did not care—or he did not. Of course he did not care or he would not have behaved so, knowing I was in so much trouble. I did not see him at all after one afternoon in the king's—about a week before that awful night in London, except that night, when I was so frightened I could not speak one word of all the things I wished to say."

This sounded strange enough, and I began more than ever to suspect something wrong. I, however, kept as firm a grasp as possible upon the stock of indignation I had brought with me.

"How did you expect to see or hear from him," asked I, "when he was lying in a loathsome dungeon without one ray of light, condemned to be hanged, drawn and quartered because of your selfish neglect to save him who at the cost of half his blood and almost his life had saved so much for you?"

Her eyes grew big, and the tears were checked by genuine surprise.

I continued: "Lady Mary, no one could have made me believe that you would stand back and let the man to whom you owed so great a debt lie so long in such misery and be condemned to such a death for the act that saved you. I could never have believed it!"

"Imp of hell!" screamed Mary. "What tale is this you bring to torture me? Have I not enough already? Tell me it is a lie or I will have your miserable little tongue torn out by the root!"

"It is no lie, princess, but an awful truth and a frightful shame to you."

I was determined to tell her all and let her see herself as she was. She gave a hysterical laugh and, throwing up her hands with her accustomed little gesture, fell upon the bed in utter abandonment, shaking as with a spasm. She did not weep; she could not; she was past that now. Jane went over to the bed and tried to soothe her.

In a moment Mary sprang to her feet, exclaiming: "Master Brandon condemned to death, and you and I here talking and moaning and weeping! Come, come; we will go to the king at once. We will start to walk, Edwin—I must be doing something—and Jane can follow with the horses and overtake us. No; I will not dress; just as I am; this will do. Bring me a hat, Jane—any one, any one." While putting on hat and gloves she continued: "I will see the king at once and tell him all—all! I will do anything. I will marry that old king of France or forty kings or forty devils! It's all one to me. Anything, anything, to save him! Oh, to think that he has been in that dungeon all this time!" And the tears came unheeded in a deluge.

She was under such headway and spoke and moved so rapidly that I could not stop her until she was nearly ready to go; then I held her by the arm while I said:

"It is not necessary now. You are too late."

A look of horror came into her face, and I continued slowly: "I procured Brandon's release nearly a week ago. I did what you should have done, and he is now at our rooms in Greenwich." Mary looked at me a moment and, turning pale, pressed her hands to her

heart and leaned against the door frame.

After a short silence she said, "Edwin Caskoden—fool! Why could you not have told me that at first? I thought my brain would burn and my heart burst."

"I should have told you had you given me time. As to the pain it gave you"—this was the last charge to my large magazine of indignation—"I care very little about that. You deserve it. I do not know what explanation you have to offer, but nothing can excuse you. An explanation, however good, would have been little comfort to you had Brandon failed you in Billingsgate that night."

She had fallen into a chair by this time and sat in reverie, staring at nothing. Then the tears came again, but more softly.

"You are right; nothing can excuse me. I am the most selfish, ungrateful, guilty creature ever born. A whole month in that dungeon!" And she covered her drooping face with her hands.

"Go away for awhile, Edwin, and then return. We shall want to see you again," said Jane.

Upon my return Mary was more composed. Jane had dressed her hair, and she was sitting on the bed in her riding habit, hat in hand. Her fingers were nervously toying at the ribbon and her eyes cast down.

"You are surely right, Sir Edwin. I have no excuse. I can have none, but I will tell you how it was. You remember the day you left me in the waiting room of the king's council, when they were discussing my marriage without one thought of me, as if I were but a slave or a dumb brute that could not feel?" She began to weep a little, but soon recovered herself.

"While waiting for you to return the Duke of Buckingham came in. I knew Henry was trying to sell me to the French king, and my heart was full of trouble—from more causes than you can know. All the council, especially that butcher's son, were urging him on, and Henry himself was anxious that the marriage should be brought about. He thought it would strengthen him for the imperial crown. He wants everything and is ambitious to be emperor. Emperor! He would cut a pretty figure! I hoped, though, I should be able to induce him not to sacrifice me to his selfish interests, as I have done before, but I knew only too well it would tax my powers to the utmost this time. I knew that if I did anything to anger or to antagonize him it would be all at an end with me. You know he is so exacting with other people's conduct for one who is so careless of his own—so virtuous by proxy. You remember how cruelly he disgraced and crushed poor Lady Chesterfield, who was in such trouble about her husband and who went to Grouche's only to learn if he were true to her. Henry seems to be particularly sensitive in that direction. One would think it was in the commandments, 'Thou shalt not go to Grouche's.'"

"Well, I knew I could do nothing with Henry if he once learned of that visit, especially as it resulted so fatally. Oh, why did I go? Why did I go? That was why I hesitated to tell Henry at once. I was hoping some other way would open whereby I might save Charles—Master Brandon. While I was waiting along came the Duke of Buckingham, and as I knew he was popular in London and had almost as much influence there as the king a thought came to me that he might help us."

"I knew that he and Master Brandon had passed a few angry words at one time in my ballroom—you remember—but I also knew that the duke was in love with me, you know, or pretended to be—he always said he was—and I felt sure I could by a little flattery induce him to do anything. He was always protesting that he would give

"I saw Buckingham the next day, for I was very anxious, you may be sure, and he said the keeper of Newgate had told him it had been arranged the night before as desired. I had come to Windsor because it was more quiet, and my heart was full. It is quite a distance from London, and I thought it might afford a better opportunity to—to see—I thought, perhaps Master Brandon might come—might want to—to see Jane and me. In fact, I wrote him before I left Greenwich that I should be here. Then I heard he had gone to New Spain. Now you see how all my troubles have come upon me at once, and this the greatest of them, because it is my fault. I can ask no forgiveness from any one, for I cannot forgive myself."

She then inquired about Brandon's health and spirits, and I left out no distressing detail, you may be sure. During my recital she sat with downcast eyes and tear stained face playing with the ribbons of her hat.

When I was ready to go, she said, "Please say to Master Brandon I should like—to see—him if he cares to come, if only that I may tell him how it happened."

"I greatly fear, in fact, I know he will not come," said I. "The cruellest blow of all, worse even than the dungeon or the sentence of death, was your failure to save him. He trusted you so implicitly. At the time of his arrest he refused to allow me to tell the king, saying he knew you would see to it—that you were pure gold."

"Ah, did he say that?" she asked, as a sad little smile lighted her face.

"His faith was so entirely without doubt that his recoil from you is correspondingly great. He goes to New Spain as soon as his health is recovered sufficiently for him to travel."

"This sent the last flock of color from her face, and with the words almost choking her throat, 'Then tell him what I have said to you and perhaps he will not feel so'—"

"I cannot do that either, Lady Mary. When I mentioned your name the other day, he said he would cure me if I ever spoke it again in his hearing."

"Is it so bad as that?" Then, meditatively: "And at his trial he did not tell the reason for the killing? Would not compromise me, who had served him so ill, even to save his own life? Noble, noble!" And her lips went together as she rose to her feet. No tears now; nothing but glowing, determined womanhood.

"Then I will go to him wherever he may be. He shall forgive me, no matter what my fault."

Soon after this we were on our way to London at a brisk gallop. We were all very silent, but at one time Mary spoke up from the midst of a feverish: "During the moment when I thought Master Brandon had been executed—when you said it was too late—it seemed that I was born again and all made over; that I was changed in the very texture of my nature by the shock, as they say the grain of the iron cannon is sometimes changed by too violent an explosion." And this proved to be true in some respects.

We rode on rapidly and did not stop in London except to give the horses drink.

After crossing the bridge Mary said, half to Jane and half to herself, "I will never marry the French king—never." Mary was but a girl pitted against a body of brutal men, two of them rulers of the two greatest nations on earth—rather heavy odds for one woman.

We rode down to Greenwich and entered the palace without exciting comment, as the princess was in the habit of coming and going at will.

The king and queen and most of the courtiers were in London at Bridewell House and Baynard's castle, where Henry was vigorously pushing the loan of 500,000 crowns for Mary's dowry, the only business of state in which at that time he took any active interest. Subsequently, as you know, he became interested in the divorce laws and the various methods whereby a man, especially a king, might rid himself of a distasteful wife, and after he saw the truth in Anne Boleyn's eyes he adopted a combined policy of church and state craft that has brought us a deal of senseless trouble ever since and is like to keep it up.

As to Mary's dowry, Henry was to pay Louis only 400,000 crowns, but he made the marriage an excuse for an extra 100,000 to be devoted to his own private use.

When we arrived at the palace the girls went to their apartments and I to mine, where I found Brandon reading. There was only one window to our common room—a dormer window set into the roof and reached by a little passage as broad as the window itself and perhaps a yard and a half long. In the alcove thus formed was a bench along the wall, cushioned by Brandon's great campaign cloak. In this window we often sat and read, and here was Brandon with his book. I had intended to tell him the girls were coming, for when Mary asked me if I thought he would come to her at the palace, and when I had again said no, she reiterated her intention of going to him at once; but my courage failed me and I did not speak of it.

I knew that Mary ought not to come to our room, and that if news of it should reach the king's ears there would be more and worse trouble than ever, and as usual Brandon would pay the penalty for all. Then again, if it were discovered it might seriously compromise both Mary and Jane, as the world is full of people who would rather say and believe an evil thing of another than to say their prayers or to believe the holy creed.

I had said as much to the Lady Mary when she expressed her determination to go to Brandon. She had been in the wrong so much of late that she was humbled, and I was brave enough to say whatever I felt, but she said she had thought it all over, and as every one was away from Greenwich it

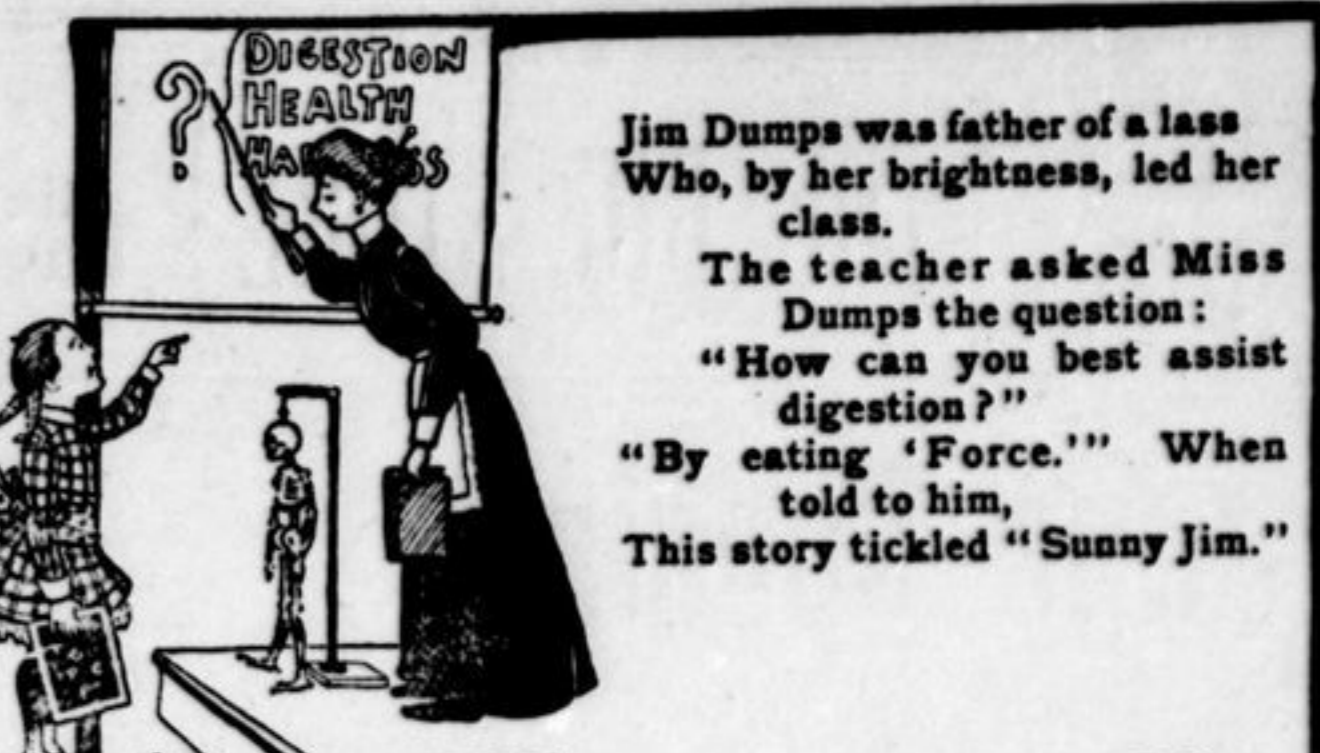
could not be found out if done secretly.

She told Jane she need not go; that she, Mary, did not want to take any risk of compromising her.

Jane would have gone, though, had she known that all her fair name would go with her. She was right, you see, when she told me while riding over to Windsor that should Mary's love blossom into a full blown passion she would wreck everything and everybody, including herself perhaps, to attain the object of so great a desire.

It looked now as if she were on the highroad to that end. Nothing short of chains and fetters could have kept her from going to Brandon that evening. There was an inherent force about her that was irresistible and swept everything before it.

In our garret she was to meet another will, stronger and infinitely better controlled than her own, and I did not know how it would all turn out.



Jim Dumps was father of a lass Who, by her brightness, led her class. The teacher asked Miss Dumps the question: "How can you best assist digestion?" "By eating 'Force.'" When told to him, This story tickled "Sunny Jim."

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"MRS. J. LINDLEY KEENE."



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[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Self Respect.

Maintain your self respect as the most precious jewel of all and the only true way to win the respect of others, and then remember what Emerson says, for what he says here is true: "No young man can be cheated out of an honorable career in life unless he cheats himself."

WM. JOHNSTON, Chairman. C. RAMAGE, Secretary.

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